DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 476 841 FL 027 697

AUTHOR	Kontra, Miklos
TITLE	British Aid for Hungarian Deaf Education from a Linguistic Human Rights Point of View.
PUB DATE	2001-00-00
NOTE	9p.; An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Biennial Conference of the Hungarian Society for the Study of English (4th, Budapest, Hungary, January 28-30, 1999). Some parts contain light or broken text.
PUB TYPE	Journal Articles (080) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
JOURNAL CIT	Hungarian Journal of Applied Linguistics; v1 n2 p63-68 2001
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Deafness; Educational Discrimination; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; *Oral Communication Method; *Sign Language; Speech Communication; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS	*Hungary; United Kingdom

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the issue of oral versus sign language in educating people who are deaf, focusing on Hungary, which currently emphasizes oralism and discourages the use of Hungarian Sign Language. Teachers of people who are hearing impaired are trained to use the acoustic channel and view signing as an obstacle to the integration of deaf people into mainstream Hungarian society. A recent news report describes how the British Council is giving children's books to a Hungarian college for teachers of handicapped students, because the college believes in encouraging hearing impaired students' speaking skills through picture books rather than allowing then to use sign language. One Hungarian researcher writes that the use of Hungarian Sign Language hinders the efficiency of teaching students who are hard of hearing, because they often prefer it to spoken Hungarian. This paper suggests that the research obscures the difference between medically deaf children, who will never learn to hear, and hearing impaired children, who may learn to hear and speak to some extent. It asserts that this is a case of linguicism and discrimination between groups of people defined on the basis of language. (Contains 15 references.) (SM)

ENTIRE DOCUMENT:
POOR PRINT QUALITY

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Miklos Kontra

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 476 841

FL027697

Alkalmazott Nyelvtudomány
I. évfolyam 2. szám 2001

MIKLÓS KONTRA

Szegedi Tudományegyetem, MTA Nyelvtudományi Intézet
University of Szeged and Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest

kontra@nytud.hu

British Aid for Hungarian Deaf Education from a Linguistic Human Rights Point of View[1]

Language, education and human rights are interwoven in significant ways and the interrelations are receiving increasing scholarly scrutiny internationally as well as in this country. In this paper the oralism vs. manualism issue in Deaf education will be presented in general, then the Hungarian Deaf education scene will be characterized. Next, I will quote a recent news item from a Hungarian daily and supply some background information to it. Finally, the Linguistic Human Rights aspects of what appears to be British involvement in discouraging the use of Hungarian Sign Language in Hungary will be explored.

On Deaf education in general

In the recently published *Encyclopedia of Bilingualism and Bilingual Education* Baker and Jones (1998: 563) say that "Deaf people have too often been placed in deficit types of education that submerge them in the language and culture of hearers rather than an enrichment model where signing is allowed as the primary language." One traditional educational approach, known as oralism, has been to develop residual hearing with the help of hearing aids and to develop lip reading skills and speech production. This approach dominated the education of Deaf people in America and Europe until the 1970s and is the dominant approach in Hungary today. Baker and Jones (1998: 567) list the beliefs the approach is based on as follows:

1. deaf children should integrate into mainstream society
2. the curriculum cannot be taught through sign language
3. sign language is insufficient for full intellectual development
4. achievement in the curriculum requires oracy and literacy in the majority language (e.g. English)

A second approach, known as manualism, sees the Deaf as a sociocultural community, with sign language as the first language and oral/aural language as

[1] An earlier version of this paper was delivered at the Fourth Biennial Conference of The Hungarian Society for the Study of English, Budapest, 28–30 January 1999. I am grateful to Professors David Martin (Gallaudet University, USA) and Tove Skutnabb-Kangas (Roskilde University, Denmark) for their helpful criticism. All the infelicities which remain do so through my fault alone.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

the second. It emphasizes the usefulness of all modes of communication, or a combination of the use of the acoustic and visual channels. Baker and Jones (1998: 567-9) list ten suggestions emerging from this approach, including the following:

1. Natural sign language should be the first language of all deaf children and be regarded as their primary language.
2. Sign language should be used to teach the curriculum.
3. Sign language can be used to teach the majority language (e.g. English) as a second language.
4. The acquisition of sign language should begin as early as possible, ideally soon after birth.
5. Bilingual education for Deaf people should be based on an enrichment form of bilingual education for hearing children such as the argument that children's self-esteem and self-identity are boosted and not threatened by the use of their first language.

On Deaf education in Hungary

At the risk of oversimplification, I will depict the current Hungarian scene as emphasizing oralism and discouraging the use of Hungarian Sign Language. Teachers for the hearing-impaired are trained to believe in teaching through the acoustic channel and view signing as an obstacle to the integration of the Deaf into mainstream Hungarian (read: hearing) society. Teachers who do not subscribe to this, such as a Hungarian graduate from Gallaudet University (USA), are in the minority and have rather little impact. The head of the Department for Teacher Training for the Deaf at *Bárczi Gusztáv Gyógypedagógiai Tanárképző Főiskola* (Budapest) is a highly influential advocate of oralism (see Csányi 1995), who views the Deaf as handicapped, the international movement to regard them as linguistic minorities as wrong, and who emphasizes that the Deaf are first of all citizens of a country – with the implication that they should learn the majority language and have mostly themselves to blame if they do not.[1]

The Hungarian Deaf community comprises about 60 thousand Deaf people and 300 thousand hard-of-hearing people (Vasvári, 1998). Most teachers for the Deaf are reported to be unable to use Hungarian Sign Language and there is only one local government in the country which has sign interpretation. All but one per cent of TV programs are broadcast without sign interpretation or captions. Hungarian Deaf people are campaigning for the legal recognition of Hungarian Sign Language as a minority language (G. Juhász 1998). In the professional arena, most recently, the Deaf community has been receiving some support in scholarly publications (see Muzsnai, 1997, 1999, and Szabó, 1998).

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

A recent news report

On 30 November 1998 the Hungarian national daily *Magyar Hírlap* printed the following news item (my translation):

> **Books for Hard-of-hearing Children**
>
> The British Council is giving children's books to the Bárczi Gusztáv Training College for Teachers of the Handicapped. The books contain stories close to the everyday experience of little children. Dr. Yvonne Csányi, head of the department of pedagogy for the hard-of-hearing and her fellow teachers believe that the speaking and hearing skills of the hard-of-hearing children can be improved greatly through the use of picture stories. A teacher of handicapped children Morag Clark, who trains Hungarian teachers for the Deaf and hard-of-hearing through a British Council program, follows this approach in teaching hard-of-hearing children. She urges children to not use sign language in everyday communication because it limits their communication. Her purpose is for the children to learn to hear, with the aid of hearing aids if necessary, and to speak intelligibly.

Some background to the news

István Muzsnai, a teacher in the Budapest Deaf School (*Hallássérültek Tanintézete*) who also teaches in the Theoretical Linguistics Program of Eötvös Loránd University, has kindly supplied the following background information to me. The British teacher in the news, Ms. Morag Clark has already visited the Budapest school several times before this time. When organization for the in-service teacher training mentioned in the news began, the Hungarian teachers in order to participate in her course were required to promise that they would teach their pupils separated from their signing fellow pupils, that is to say by isolating the pupils from the signing children by scheduling breaks between classes such that their pupils could not meet signing pupils. The Hungarian teachers all agreed with this policy and Clark's approach, which is in total agreement with the way they had been trained. The gift books fill a vacuum in Hungary because there are no good picture books for Hungarian Deaf schools. The English text to the pictures, however, was obviously of limited use for Hungarian children. One class with four pupils learning English could use them for a while, but two children soon dropped out. According to Muzsnai, the main problem with Ms. Clark's visit was that it reinforced the teachers' belief in oralism and thus has reinforced its hegemony among Hungarian teachers, who have no opportunity to learn about alternative approaches prevalent in the USA, Sweden, Finland and several other countries.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Linguistic Human Rights aspects

Branson and Miller (1998) have published an excellent paper on linguistic imperialism and the recognition and development of sign languages in Australia and Indonesia. They show how "the dominant linguistic forces seek not only to destroy minority languages but to transform existing minority linguistic processes to conform with the form and content of the national language, through the development and promotion of manually coded versions of national spoken and written languages in formal education," (1998: 3) rather than provide a strong basis in the natural sign language as the first language.

Education through the medium of one's mother tongue is considered to be a Linguistic Human Right, especially in the first several years of education (see, e.g. Grosjean, 1999, Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson, 1994, Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995). Linguists agree that Deaf communities have fully developed sign languages and thus are linguistic minorities. Various international documents such as *The Hague Recommendations Regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities* (1996)[2] recognize that

> The first years of education are of pivotal importance in a child's development. Educational research suggests that the medium of teaching at pre-school and kindergarten levels should ideally be the child's language. Wherever possible, States should create conditions enabling parents to avail themselves of this option.

According to Csányi (1995), the use of Hungarian Sign Language hinders the efficiency of teaching the hard-of-hearing because they often prefer its use to using spoken Hungarian. Sign Language, so the claim goes, is an easy way out and its users do not integrate into mainstream society as best they could. Most people with hearing problems are not medically deaf but are hard-of-hearing, and because at an early age it is not possible to medically diagnose medically deaf children, it is only fair, so Csányi claims, to provide education for all through the acoustic channel.

What Csányi does here is to obscure the difference between medically deaf children who will never learn to hear and the hard-of-hearing who may learn to hear and speak to some extent, as a result of special education and by means of hearing aids. She seems to be taking an "equal educational opportunity for all" position but in actual fact the implementation of her policy deprives the medically deaf children of their right to develop a linguistic competence by age three, and it deprives the Deaf or hearing children born to Deaf parents of their right to a mother tongue. This is a case of linguicism or discrimination between groups of people defined on the basis of language.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Educational aid and its reception

This story is at least partly about British educational aid to Hungary since Ms. Clark's in-service course was taught through a British Council program. Obviously, I have neither the right nor the intention to doubt the British Council's goodwill in this case, but the fact remains that the printed news has made the Council look like a foreign agency whose program has discouraged the use of Hungarian Sign Language in Hungary. International (educational) aid programs sometimes generate mixed reactions due to inadequate planning which hurts the feelings of the recipients. Unfortunately, in this case, part of the Hungarian recipients must feel as I did when I recently went to the Swedish furniture company IKEA's store in Budapest, where all the signs use informal *tu* address (*tegezés* in Hungarian) indiscriminately. The company's managers probably think that informal address is all right in Sweden in all communicative situations, so it must also be all right in Hungary. They couldn't be more wrong...

Notes

1. It is impossible to miss the similarity of this linguicist argument to those in the English-Only movement in the USA or the Slovak-Only policies for the indigenous Hungarian minority in Slovakia. See, e.g., Martin (1999, ms.) and Kontra (1998).
2. A Hungarian translation of *The Hague Recommendations* is available in Csernusné and Forintos, eds. (2000 13–27).

References

Baker, C. and Prys Jones, S. (1998) *Encyclopedia of Bilingualism and Bilingual Education*. Clevedon and Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters.

Branson, J. and Miller, D. (1998) Nationalism and the linguistic rights of Deaf communities: Linguistic imperialism and the recognition and development of sign languages. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 2, pp. 3–34.

Csányi Y. (1995) Gondolatok a jelnyelv alkalmazási lehetőségeiről a súlyos fokban hallássérült gyermekek és fiatalok nevelése során [Remarks on the possibilities to use sign language in the education of children who are severely hard of hearing]. *Gyógypedagógiai Szemle* 1995 április–június 105–115.

Csernusné Ortutay K. és Forintos É. (eds., 2000) *Nyelvi jogok* [Language rights]. Veszprém: Veszprémi Egyetemi Kiadó.

G. Juhász J. (1998) A siketek kétnyelvűek, mégsem értik meg őket [The Deaf are bilingual, yet nobody understands them]. *Magyar Hírlap* 20 October 1998, 6.

Grosjean, F. (1999) A siket gyermek joga a kétnyelvűvé váláshoz [The right of the Deaf child to become bilingual]. *Modern Nyelvoktatás* 5/4, 5–8.

The Hague Recommendations Regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities. (1996) The Hague: Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations.

Kontra M. (1998) Language rights arguments in Central Europe and the USA: How similar are they? In: Kibbee, D. A. (ed.) *Language Legislation and Linguistic Rights*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, pp. 142–178.

Martin, D. S. The English-Only Movement and Sign Language for Deaf Learners: An Instructive Parallel. Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University. Manuscript. (1999).

Muzsnai I. (1997) Kinek az érdekét hivatott szolgálni a szurdopedagógia? [Whose interests should be served by education for the Deaf?] *Gyógypedagógiai Szemle* 1997. április–június 139–142.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Muzsnai I. (1999) The Recognition of Sign Language: A Threat or the Way to a Solution? In: Miklós Kontra et al. (eds.) *Language: A Right and a Resource. Approaching Linguistic Human Rights.* Budapest: Central European University Press. pp. 279–296.

Phillipson, R. and Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (1995) Linguistic rights and wrongs. *Applied Linguistics* 16. pp. 483–04.

Skutnabb-Kangas, T. and Phillipson, R. (eds., 1994) *Linguistic human rights: Overcoming linguistic discrimination.* Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Szabó M. H. (1998) A siketség alkalmazott nyelvészeti vonatkozásai [Being Deaf and its applied linguistic aspects]. *Modern Nyelvoktatás* 4/4. 28–33.

Vasvári É. (1998) A diákévek után azonnal nyugdíjba [Straight on to retirement after schooldays]. *Magyar Nemzet* 24 December 1998. 14.

CALL FOR PAPERS
TENTH INTERNATIONAL MORPHOLOGY MEETING
BUDAPEST, MAY 9-12, 2002

The TENTH INTERNATIONAL MORPHOLOGY MEETING to be organized by Ferenc Kiefer (Hungarian Academy of Sciences) and Wolfgang Dressler (University of Vienna) will be held in Budapest, May 9 through 12, 2002.

PREFIXATION: prefixes and other prefix-like bound morphemes, particle constructions was chosen as the main topic of the conference. Special emphasis should be given to scales of morphologization, typological and psycholinguistic aspects of prefixation as well as to problems concerning the relationship between prefixation and word formation, on the one hand, and between prefixation and syntax, on the other.

The conference is open to other morphology-related topics as well.

Abstracts must be submitted by e-mail before December 1, 2001. Authors will be notified about the acceptance of their paper by January 31, 2002.

Contact person: Ms Rozália Demeter
E-mail: drozi@nytud.hu
Telephone: (36-1)321-4830. Ext. 117., 118. Fax: (36-1)322-9297
Address: Research Institute for Linguistics, Hungarian Academy of Sciences
H-1068 Budapest, Benczúr utca 33

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

2001. I. évfolyam, 2. szám

Alkalmazott Nyelvtudomány

Hungarian Journal of Applied Linguistics

Veszprém

Alkalmazott Nyelvtudomány

Hungarian Journal of Applied Linguistics

Szerkesztőbizottság elnöke (Head of the Editorial Board):

GÓSY MÁRIA (Budapest)

Főszerkesztő (Editor-in-Chief):

LENGYEL ZSOLT (Veszprém, Pécs)

Szerkesztőbizottság (Editorial Board):

GALGÓCZI LÁSZLÓ (Szeged)

HIDASI JUDIT (Budapest, Szombathely)

KONTRA MIKLÓS (Budapest, Szeged)

KLAUDY KINGA (Budapest, Miskolc)

NAVRACSICS JUDIT (Veszprém)

SZÉKELY GÁBOR (Nyíregyháza)

Tudományos tanácsadók (Advisory Board):

DEZSŐ LÁSZLÓ (Budapest)

KIEFER FERENC (Budapest)

PAPP FERENC (Budapest)

SZÉPE GYÖRGY (Pécs)

A folyóiratot kiadja az MTA Nyelvtudományi Bizottság Alkalmazott Nyelvészeti Munkabizottsága; szerkeszti a Veszprémi Egyetem Alkalmazott Nyelvészeti Tanszéke. Megjelenik évente kétszer.

(*Hungarian Journal of Applied Linguistics* is issued by the Applied Linguistics Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and is edited and published by the Department of Applied Linguistics of the University of Veszprém. Two issues of the journal are published annually.)

Megvásárolható vagy megrendelhető:

HÜLBER ATTILÁNÉ
Veszprémi Egyetem, Tanárképző Kar, Alkalmazott Nyelvtudományi Tanszék
Veszprém, 8201, Egyetem u. 10., Tel./Fax: 06/88/406-360

ISSN 1587 – 1061

Készült az OOK-PRESS Kft. nyomdájában
Veszprém, Csillag u. 5.
felelős vezető: Szathmáry Attila

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

ERIC

REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: BRITISH AID FOR HUNGARIAN DEAF EDUCATION FROM A LINGUISTIC HUMAN RIGHTS POINT OF VIEW

Author(s): MIKLÓS KONTRA

Corporate Source:

Publication Date: 2001

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in t monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper co and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the pa

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Level 1

Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) *and* paper copy.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

Level 2A

Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

Level 2B

Check here for Level 2B release, permitti reproduction and dissemination in microfic only.

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits. If permission to reproduce is granted, but neither box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic/optical media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contract requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to sat information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here please

Signature: Miklós Kontra	Printed Name/Position/Title: PROF. MIKLÓS KONTRA		
Organization/Address: LINGUISTICS INSTITUTE, HUNGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, H-1068 BUDAPEST, BENCZÚR U. 33. HUNGARY	Telephone: (36) 321-4830	FAX: (36) 322-9297	
	E-Mail Address: kontra@nytud.hu	Date: 5/15/03	

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide th following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependabl source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS).

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price Per Copy:
Quantity Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant a reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V.WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

You can send this form and your document to the ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, which will forward your materials to the appropriate ERIC Clearinghouse.

Acquisitions Coordinator
ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguisitics
4646 40th Street NW
Washington, DC 20016-1859

(800) 276-9834/ (202) 362-0700
e-mail: eric@cal.org

| Database Use Policy | Z39.50 Compatibility Issues | List of Journals Abstracted |